Discovery of ancient civilization

650. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether excavators have lately stumbled upon the remains of a busting ancient civilization and urban settlement in Kotabal, Anantnag district of South Kashmir;

(b) if so, what important and significant findings suggesting existence of such ancient urban settlements were made;

(c) whether any such findings suggesting ancient settlements and civilizations have also been made in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and other States during the last five years; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) The Directorate of Archives, Archaeology and Museums, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, recently carried out explorations in Kotabal, Distt. Anantnag, Kashmir. These explorations have reported to have revealed some decorative tiles bearing stamped geometrical, natural and abstract motifs. These tiles, forming part of a pavement, are similar to those found at Harwan, Distt. Srinagar, J&K. On stylistic grounds, the tiles are datable to *circa* 3rd-4th century A.D. The discovery suggests posssibility of an ancient settlement thriving at the find-spot.

(c) and (d) Such tiles are remains of their own kind and are not so far reported outside Kashmir, in any other State in India.

Original writings of Mahatma

651. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the original writings of Mahatma Gandhi have been tempered with;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has taken any action against the persons responsible for this act; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir. The original records of Mahatma Gandhi available with the organizations of the Ministry of Culture have not been tampered with.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Theft of antiques from ancient temples

652. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that organized and large scale thefts of Indian antiques is taking place in ancient temples and far flung villages of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the countries and museums abroad where these antiques have reportedly resurfaced; and

(d) the action taken to trace and bring back the stolen antiques?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The cases of theft from the centrally protected ancient temples as reported by the Circle Offices of Archaeological Survey of India during the last five years, alongwith the present status of action taken in each case are given in the Statement. (See below)

(c) and (d) No such information is available.